

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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P 071443Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2648

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 0113

STADIS////////////////////////////////

FOR ASST. SEC. ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

EO: 11652: N/A
TAGS: AMGT XM
SUBJ: REORGANIZATION OF ARA

REF: STATE 304849

1. ACCEPTING INVITATION IN LAST PARAGRAPH OF REFTTEL, THE FOLLOW-
ING ARE SOME THOUGHTS WHICH MAY BE USEFUL:

I AGREE THAT THERE IS TOO MUCH LAYERING, DUPLICATION AND "FAT" IN
THE BUREAU'S ORGANIZATION, AND THAT STREAMLINING AND LEANER
STAFFING ARE NEEDED. I DO, HOWEVER, DEEPLY DISAGREE WITH THE
CONCEPT THAT MUCH OF OUR TROUBLE IS THAT WE THINK IN TERMS
COUNTRIES NOT PROBLEMS, AND WITH THE CONSEQUENT CONCLUSION THAT
COUNTRY DESKS SHOULD BE ABOLISHED. ELIMINATION OF A GEOGRAPHIC
FOCUS AND A COUNTRY DESK STRUCTURE WOULD BE A GREAT MISTAKE. IT
WOULD CRIPPLE RATHER THAN HELP OUR CAPACITY TO UNDERSTAND REALI-
TY, BECAUSE IT WOULD DISTORT THE PERCEPTUAL PROCESS.

2. THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT REALITY IS CAST IN COUNTRY
TERMS. WE DEAL BASICALLY AND PRIMARILY WITH OTHER NATIONS AND
PEOPLES. WE DEAL WITH PROBLEMS, TRANSNATIONAL PHENOMENA AND FUNC-
TIONAL FORCES AS THEY AFFECT AND ARE MANIFEST THROUGH NATIONS
AND INTER-NATION INTERACTION. IT IS TRUE OF COURSE THAT THERE
ARE GENERIC CATEGORIES OF PROBLEMS AND INCREASING TRANSNATIONAL
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FORCES THAT HAVE MULTINATIONAL IMPACTS AND LINKAGES. AS HOFFMAN

SAYS, THE GAME IS PLAYED ON A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHESSBOARDS. SO FUNCTIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE ARE EQUALLY ESSENTIAL FOR CORRECT PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING. THE TROUBLE WITH MAKING THE FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE THE PRIMARY CORE OF NONE'S MIND-SET, HOWEVER, IS THAT IT DISTORTS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE BASIC COUNTRY/HISTORICAL NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. IT REINFORCES A BAD MENTAL HABIT WHICH OUR TECHNOLOGICAL, ACHIEVEMENT-ORIENTED, EXPERIMENTAL CULTURE PROVIDES--THE TEMPTATION TO CONCEIVE OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND FOREIGN POLICY SITUATIONS AS SELF-CONTAINED, DISCRETE, TECHNICAL PROBLEMS, LIKE BUILDING A BRIDGE OR A LEGAL SUIT, WHICH CAN BE RESOLVED IF WE CAN ONLY FIND THE CORRECT FORMULAE AND APPLICATION OF RESOURCES. IT EMPHASIZES THE "MANIPULATIVE- AND THE "ENGINEERING", AND RISKS LOSING THE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIO-HISTORICAL PROCESSES. REAL LIFE SITUATIONS CANNOT BE DIVIDED INTO ASPECTS OR SETS OF FACTORS OR FUNCTIONS. THEY ARE RATHER INTEGRAL PARTS OF SYSTEMS OR SUBSYSTEMS, COMPRISED OF INTERACTING PROCESSES AND POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK LOOPS. THE DISAGGREGATION AND ISOLATION ESSENTIAL FOR SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF "SPECIALIST/FUNCTIONAL" HANDLING ARE OFTEN FATAL HANDICAPS IN POLICY PRESCRIPTION WHICH USUALLY REQUIRES INSTEAD A HOLISTIC, INTEGRATIVE CONCEPTUAL APPROACH.

3. IT MAY BE THAT THE PARTICULAR CURRENT ARA ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE GOES TO THE OTHER EXTREME AND IS EQUALLY DISTORTING ON THE PAROCHIAL SIDE. THE PRESENT STRUCTURE PROBABLY DOES FEED CLIENTISM AND PAROCHIALISM. IF SO THIS IS A FAULT OF ORGANIZATION, ABUSE AND EXCESS AND NOT AN INDICATION THAT THE COUNTRY-STRUCTURE CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IS INVALID. WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO REACT TO PRESENT MISTAKES BY SWINGING TO THE OTHER EXTREME, THROWING OUT THE BABY WITH THE BATHWATER.

4. THE DEBATE AS TO WHETHER WE SHOULD BE GEOGRAPHICALLY OR FUNCTIONALLY ORIENTED IS AN OLD ONE. THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF ONE OR THE OTHER. WE NEED BOTH. WHILE I BELIEVE THAT THE CORE OF OUR MIND-SET MUST HAVE A GEOGRAPHIC NOT FUNCTIONAL FOCUS, WE NEED NEVERTHELESS TO INTEGRATE WITH IT FUNCTIONAL, AND SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE AND PERSPECTIVES. POLICY MAKERS TODAY MUST IN FACT BE "INTEGRATORS" (OR GENERALISTS), WITH AN INDEPENDENT CAPACITY FOR UNDERSTANDING THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN THE WORK OF SPECIALISTS, AND CAPABLE OF SELECTING, INTEGRATING AND TRANSLATING INTO PRACTICABLE PRESCRIPTIONS THE RELEVANT DATA AND INFORMATION FROM THE RELEVANT SPECIALIST, FUNCTIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FIELDS. TO CHOOSE AND INTEGRATE DATA AND DEAL WITH COMPLEXITIES AND AMBIVALENCES, THE INTEGRATOR NEEDS MORE THAN JUST PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF FUNCTIONS, SPECIALITIES OR COUNTRIES. HIS INTEGRATIVE CAPACITY DEPENDS ON TWO INTELLECTUAL PRECONDITIONS. THE FIRST IS A REASONABLY COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRA-

TIVE WAY OF THINKING ABOUT THE NATURE AND FUNCTIONING OF SOCIETY AND CULTURE THAT PROVIDES GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING DATA AND REFERENCE POINTS AND ORCHESTRATING THEM IN MEANINGFUL WAYS. THE SECOND IS A VALID STANDARD BY WHICH TO JUDGE THE CONSISTENCY OF POLICIES AND ACTIONS WITH THE VALUES AND NORMS OF BEHAVIOR OF THE SOCIETIES INVOLVED AT BOTH ENDS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIP--AND THIS MEANS BASICALLY HAVING A COUNTRY/GEOGRAPHIC CORE-PERSPECTIVE (AS WELL AS SOME TRAINING IN THE HUMANITIES).

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2649

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 BOGOTA 0113

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FOR ASST. SEC. ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

5. I DARE SAY THAT IF YOU DID ABOLISH COUNTRY DESKS YOU WOULD SOON FIND IT NECESSARY TO RECREATE SOMETHING LIKE THEM, BECAUSE YOU SIMPLY MUST HAVE SOME POINT AT WHICH COUNTRY INFORMATION, FROM THE TRIVIAL TO THE PROFOUND WHICH WILL INEVITABLY BE PLACED BEFORE US, CAN BE HANDLED. I SHOULD ADD THAT MY STAFF WITH WHOM I SHARED REFTEL AGREES ON THE DESIRABILITY OF RETAINING A COUNTRY DESK STRUCTURE OF SOME SORT. AS ONE OF THEM PUT IT: "I TAKE EXCEPTION TO THE IDEA OF DOING AWAY WITH THE COUNTRY DESK. A DESK OFFICER, ADMITTEDLY, CAN BECOME PAROCHIAL. EFFECTIVE EXECUTIVES, HOWEVER, CAN CURB THIS TENDENCY AND, ADDITIONALLY, TAKE IT INTO ACCOUNT IN DEALING WITH THE DESK. MORE THAN BALANCING THE DANGER OF "CLIENTISM" IS THE TENDENCY OF DESK OFFICERS TO BECOME MOBILE MEMORY BANKS AND FINAL FILTERS ON MATTERS CONCERNING "THEIR" COUNTRIES. WHEN THE UNPLEASANT DAY COMES WHEN STATE NEEDSSE "RURITANIAN TASK FORCE" THEY WILL WANT TO DRAW ON ALL THE ARCANA ACCUMULATED BY PRESENT AND PAST RURITANIAN DESK OFFICERS."

6. I TAKE IT THAT THE ACTUAL ORGANIZATION YOU MAY BE THINKING OF DOES NOT, YET AT LEAST, GO SO FAR AS TO ELIMINATE THE GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS. WHILE I AM NOT SURE HOW THE CONCEPTS LISTED IN PARA 5 OF REFTTEL WORK OUT IN ACTUAL ORGANIZATION, LET ME VENTURE TO SUGGEST THAT A REORGANIZED BUREAU MIGHT WELL LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

A. LA WOULD BE ORGANIZATIONALLY "DISINTEGRATED" FROM ARA AND RETURNED TO CENTRAL AID. THE RELATIONSHIP WOULD THEN BE WHAT IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IS WITH OTHER BUREAUS. THE LINKAGE AND "FIT" WOULD BE WITH THE ECONOMIC DIVISION LISTED BELOW.

B. ARA WOULD BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR DIVISIONS, EACH UNDER A DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY AS FOLLOWS:

(1) GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION COMPOSED OF OFFICES OF MEXICAN AFFAIRS, OF CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN AFFAIRS (INCLUDING PANAMA), OF BRAZILIAN AND RIVER PLATE AFFAIRS (BRAZIL, URUGUAY, PARAGUAY AND ARGENTINA) AND NORTH AND WEST COAST AFFAIRS (GUYANA TO CHILE). (VARIATION ON THIS BREAKDOWN IS OF COURSE POSSIBLE.)

(2) DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (INCLUDING LINKAGE TO EB, AID, TREASURY, ETC.).

(3) DIVISION OF REGIONAL POLITICAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND POLICY PLANNING, INCLUDING OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF REGIONAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS (OAS, UN/IO, LOS, POL/MILITARY, AND GENERAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS) AND OFFICE OF POLICY PLANNING (I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE PROPOSED MERGER OF POLICY PLANNING AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS; THAT SEEMS INCONGRUOUS.)

(4) DIVISION OF EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT, HANDLING ALL ADMINISTRATION, PERSONNEL, B&F, ETC.

7. IN THE ABOVE ORGANIZATION, A TEAM OF 4 DEPUTIES PROVIDES YOU WITH A SMALL GROUP TAPPING ALL BASIC FIELDS AND CAPABLE OF INTEGRATION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION. HOW THE DIVISIONS ARE ORGANIZED WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT, BUT THE OFFICE DIRECTORS ARE CLEARLY KEY PERSONNEL, SHOULD BE TOP FLIGHT, AND AT THE SENIOR OFFICER LEVEL. IN THE GEOGRAPHIC OFFICES I DO NOT SEE HOW ONE CAN AVOID ASSIGNING OFFICERS WITH COUNTRY RESPONSIBILITIES. IF NOT TRADITIONAL "DESK OFFICERS", SOMEONE MUST STILL HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOCUSING ON COUNTRY DEVELOPMENTS AND INFORMATION, EVEN IF ONE OFFICER HAS MORE THAN ONE COUNTRY.

8. AS REFTTEL STATES, THERE ARE EVEN MORE SERIOUS QUESTIONS OF TRAINING, SELECTION OF PERSONNEL AND THE WORK TO BE DONE. ONE AREA THAT I BELIEVE NEEDS GREAT THOUGHT IS REPORTING--WHAT KINDS OF INFORMATION YOU NEED, WASHINGTON NEEDS AND WE CAN PROVIDE. THERE ARE NOW NO STANDARDS, AND THE PRACTICE AND THE CONCEPT ARE VARIED AND VAGUE. THIS IS SO BROAD A SUBJECT, I SHALL TAKE THE LIBERTY OF WRITING YOU LATER WITH SOME MORE EXTENSIVE THOUGHTS ON THE TOPIC.

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